

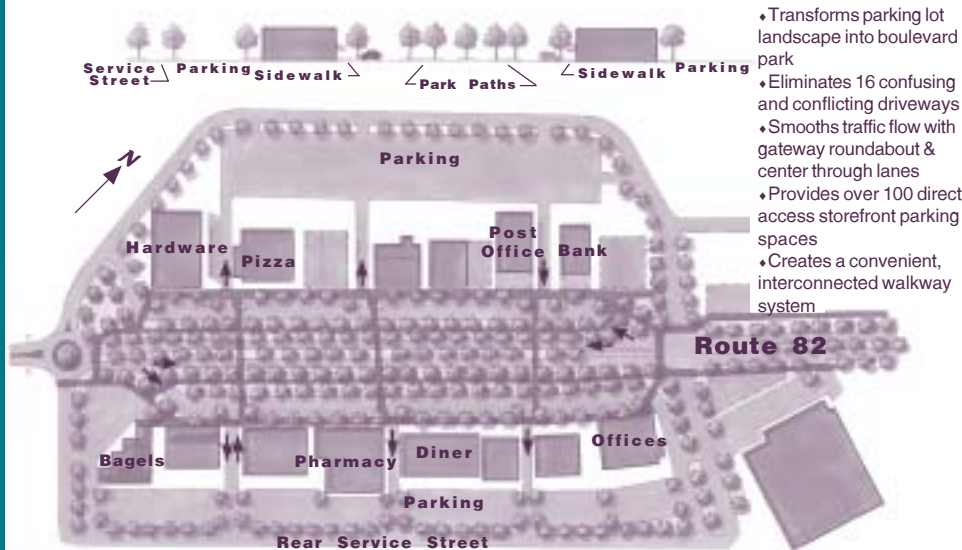
Facelift, Pedestrian Improvements Proposed for Hopewell Junction

By Eoin Wrafter, Senior Planner

Hopewell Junction is the primary hamlet in East Fishkill, one of the largest and fastest-growing towns in Dutchess County. Situated around the intersection of New York State Routes 82 and 376, it is home to several of the Town's important civic institutions, including the town hall, police station, court, library and recreation park, as well as many businesses and homes. There are also

The study focused on three main areas: the Route 82 corridor between Trinkia Lane and Unity Street, the intersection of Route 82 and Route 376, and various connections to the Hamlet from surrounding areas. The resultant Hopewell Junction Pedestrian Plan includes recommendations, priorities for implementation, and estimated construction costs for preferred alternatives.

Hopewell Junction - A Centerpiece Boulevard Concept



- Transforms parking lot landscape into boulevard park
- Eliminates 16 confusing and conflicting driveways
- Smooths traffic flow with gateway roundabout & center through lanes
- Provides over 100 direct access storefront parking spaces
- Creates a convenient, interconnected walkway system

two major residential developments being proposed in the hamlet area. Hopewell Junction is primarily automobile-oriented, and there is a great deal of both destination and through-traffic. Walking from place to place within the Hamlet is difficult.

With the goal of promoting pedestrian accessibility and safety throughout their hamlet, the Town of East Fishkill approached the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC) to study the possibilities for improvement. In late 2000 the PDCTC, the Town of East Fishkill and Urbitran (a consultant firm hired by the PDCTC) began a pedestrian study of the hamlet of Hopewell Junction.

The plan will be used by the Town to identify priority projects and actions to improve pedestrian accessibility in the Hopewell Junction area.

The section of Route 82 between Trinkia Lane and Unity Street is where the Plan proposes the most dramatic changes, as shown in the drawing above. The existing corridor has two travel lanes separated by a center turn-lane. There are sixteen separate driveways that have access to Route 82 in this section which, in conjunction with the center turn lane, have created confusing traffic patterns in the area. Pedestrian facilities in the area are limited.

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Housing Task Force Recommends Diversity in Housing Stock

By Anne Saylor, Housing Coordinator

The Department of Planning and Development has released a report prepared by the Smart Growth Housing Task Force – a subgroup of the citizen-member Dutchess County Planning Board. The Task Force, composed of local government officials, realtors, developers, economic development officials and senior citizen advocates, and assisted by the Dutchess County Planning Board and the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, met through the summer and early fall of 2001. Their goals were to summarize the current state of the County's housing stock, identify obstacles to a balanced housing stock, and make recommendations as to how these obstacles can be addressed as a community. The Smart Growth Housing Task Force Report was drafted in December 2001 and was recently finalized for distribution. Original formation of the Report was at the request of County Executive William R. Steinhaus, who identified the issue of housing availability as a priority in his January 2001 State of the County Address.

The Report highlights the significant changes in the County since the last census (1990), including an increase in

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The proposal calls for the creation of a tree-lined boulevard in this section of Route 82. A new landscaped central median (replacing the center turn-lane) would be flanked by one through-lane in each direction and a park-like pedestrian pathway on each side. Vehicular access to the stores would be provided via a landscaped access road on each side of Route 82, with angled parking directly in front of the stores. The possibility of a roundabout at the entrance to the Hamlet at Trinka Lane is also discussed in the Plan. The proposal eliminates confusing driveways, facilitates smoother traffic flow, and provides a convenient interconnected walkway system, in addition to creating an attractive environment with an abundance of trees.

Other items of interest in the plan include:

- ◆ specifications/guidelines for new sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities that can be incorporated into Town Law;
- ◆ a local law for sidewalk maintenance by adjacent property owners; and
- ◆ development of "typical costs" for the construction of sidewalks, multi-use trails and other pedestrian features.

The Town is moving ahead with the Plan's recommendations. It is constructing sidewalks to connect Route 82 to the community center and Route 376 to the

recreation area. The Town is also working with the NYS Department of Transportation to get several crosswalks painted on Route 376 this year, and to construct a sidewalk along Route 82 to connect the community center to the central part of the Hamlet. Other parts of the plan will be implemented as opportunities arise. 🌳

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the minority population, a decrease in population in the 18-34 age group, and an equally significant increase in the senior citizen population. Societal changes, such as a higher divorce rate, people staying single longer and living longer, contributed to the fact that while the population grew by 8% the number of households grew by 11%. One and



Typical new home construction in Dutchess County, beginning in the upper \$300Ks, is out of reach for most residents.

two-person households now make up 56.1% of the total households in the county, and there are 7,835 single-parent households, a 26% increase since 1990.

The income and employment data show that the County has seen a significant increase in median household income and dramatic changes in the workforce, largely due to a substantial rise in the number of residents commuting outside of the County to work.

The rental and for-sale housing market have also seen significant cost increases. For details about the increased costs of rental housing in the County see the article "Rental Housing Supply Tightens" in this newsletter. In the for-sale housing market, the median sales price of a home in January 2002 was \$210,000, which represents a 35% increase since January 2000. Almost no single-family housing is available for under \$100,000, and the least expensive new-construction single-family housing is in the Town of Poughkeepsie at \$367,000. Almost no moderately priced homes or townhouses that would be attainable for people who make the median annual household income (which is approximately

\$68,100) are being built in Dutchess County.

The Housing Report suggests that the County is beginning to have a disconnect between the housing needs of many residents and the housing that is being built. The large expensive homes that dominate the new construction market are inappropriate for most young

families, singles and senior citizens. Income data shows that 61% of the County's households cannot afford the median priced single-family house. The rental market is equally tight. A single person with a \$7.00 an hour job (the effective minimum wage in Dutchess County) would need to

work 65 hours a week to afford the average studio apartment. The hourly wage needed to afford a one-bedroom apartment working only 40 hours is \$15.35. These figures are based on housing costs equaling 30% of gross income.

Several impediments to moderately-priced housing are identified and discussed in the Report, including zoning, the Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) mindset, water and sewer availability, and the development approval process. A review of local zoning ordinances showed that there is little vacant land zoned for apartments or homes on small lots. Related to the NIMBY syndrome, the Report outlines research that shows apartments and smaller homes do not have the negative impact on property values or cause the increase in taxes that opponents of such housing suggest.

The Task Force's recommendations for both municipalities and the County include the following:

Municipalities should:

- ◆ review master plans and zoning ordinances to provide opportunities for townhouses, apartments, and

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PLAN ON IT is a publication of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation. PLAN ON IT brings local, regional and state planning news to over 1600 individuals and organizations. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or wish to share your views on planning, write to Editor, PLAN ON IT, 27 High Street, 2nd Floor, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601, or phone (845) 486-3600. PLAN ON IT is also posted on our website at www.dutchessny.gov.

homes on smaller lots, offer density-bonuses to create moderately-priced housing, and allow the construction of two-family homes or accessory apartments;

- ◆ permit assisted living and continuum of care communities where appropriate; and
- ◆ review planning, zoning and building department procedures in an effort to

priority under its Community Development Program (also federally funded); and

- ◆ work together with local municipalities and with the Hudson Valley Builder's Association to create moderately priced housing.

A full list of recommendations can be obtained from the Dutchess County



The Dondero Building in Beacon was renovated with funds from the County's HOME Program. It includes 3 affordable units and 4 market-rate units.

encourage the redevelopment of existing structures and create infill housing.

The County should:

- ◆ review all county-owned, tax defaulted (in-rem) properties for their potential use as affordable housing sites prior to making them available at public auction. Such properties could be made available to non-profit and private developers who agree to build moderately-priced housing;
- ◆ increase education and technical assistance to municipal officials and the public regarding the need to provide a variety of housing types and the mechanisms to create such housing;
- ◆ use funds from its Partnership for Manageable Growth Program to assist the construction by the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority of water and sewer for such housing. The Task Force also recommends that the County use this program to pay for revisions to the master plans and zoning ordinances discussed above;
- ◆ look at revising its priorities under the federally funded, locally administered HOME Program and add housing as a

Department of Planning and Development, 27 High Street, Poughkeepsie, NY, 12601 (845) 486-3600. The Task Force's report is available on the County's website, www.dutchessny.gov.

Rental Housing Supply Tightens

By Anne Saylor, Housing Coordinator

Results of the 2001 Rental Housing Survey show that the rental housing market is tightening, with rents increasing at almost triple the rate of inflation and very few vacancies. Average rents for one-bedroom and two-bedroom units in apartment complexes have increased 8.3% and 9.1%, respectively, since 2000. The average one-bedroom rent has increased from \$721 to \$781, and the average two-bedroom rent increased from \$855 to \$933.

The survey, released by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, annually assesses the rental housing market by collecting and analyzing data on the major sectors of our rental housing market: apartment complexes, multi-family housing, single-family homes and condos for rent, and subsidized housing.

Block Grants

The Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, through its Community Development Block Grant Program, has made its funding award announcements for the 2002 program year. Every municipality that applied for block grant dollars this year received an award, along with many human service agencies, at a total of \$1,819,000. The majority of the funding was allocated to economic development/infrastructure activities, handicapped improvements, and parks and recreation. The block grant funds are intended to benefit low-to-moderate income people by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities. For more information about the Block Grant awards by municipality, please contact Beth Doyle, Community Development Administrator at (845) 486-3600.

The overall vacancy rate in the 7,508 apartment complex units covered by the survey is 1.7%. It should be noted that 48 of the vacancies were in one complex in the Town of Poughkeepsie (this complex is under renovation although management reported that the vacant units were occupiable). If these units are removed from the vacancy calculation, the vacancy rate in the balance of the units is only 1%. Housing experts recognize a 5% vacancy rate as an indicator of a healthy rental market; it is low enough not to negatively affect landlords, but high enough to permit tenant mobility.

Multi-family housing shows a similar trend. The average rents for one and two-bedroom units increased 10.9% and 9.6%, respectively, over the past year. The average one-bedroom rent increased from \$630 to \$699, while the average two-bedroom rent increased from \$789 to \$865. Although a vacancy rate is not calculated for multi-family housing, it is clear that there is a tightening within the multi-family rental market, since only 181 units were available during the month that the survey information was collected. This compares to 263 units last year and 448 units in 1996. A total of 160 new units of rental housing were constructed during the period covered by the survey.

Condominiums and homes for rent

Cont'd on page 4

show similar rent increases to the apartment complexes and multi-family units. There was also a decrease in the number of units available, from 135 units in 2000 to only 94 units in 2001. For subsidized housing, as with previous years, the results show that all subsidized housing units are fully occupied with waiting lists ranging from 3 months to 2 years.

The survey calculates the annual income needed to afford the average rents, using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standard that a household should pay no more than 30% of their gross income for housing, including utilities:

Annual Household Income Needed to Afford Average Dutchess County Rents

Unit Sizes	Annual Income
Apartment Complexes	
Studio	\$23,680
1-bedroom	\$31,920
2-bedroom	\$38,280
3-bedroom	\$49,760
Multi-Family Units	
Studio	\$24,880
1-bedroom	\$31,320
2-bedroom	\$39,000
3-bedroom	\$42,400

While the income levels noted above may not be difficult for two income families to attain, they are difficult for senior citizens, single-income families and single parent families and entry-level employees. In addition, although two-income families are more able to afford these rents than the groups noted above, these rents consume such a large portion of their income that it is difficult for them to save money for the downpayment and closing costs associated with the purchase of a home.

Copies of the 2001 Rental Housing Survey are available from the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development at (845) 486-3600, or on the County's website, www.dutchessny.gov. 🌳

Planning Federation Honors Three

By Jennifer Coccozza, Planner

Despite the adverse weather conditions, the Dutchess County Planning Federation's Annual Awards Dinner went on as planned. With the majority of municipalities in attendance, the evening commenced with the Keynote Address given by John R. Nolon, Director of the Pace University Land Use Law Center. Mr. Nolon directed his speech to the elected and appointed municipal officials, commending them for their work and encouraging them to make better use of their existing authority to manage growth and development in their communities - for now and in the future.

The Federation then honored the three award-winning projects chosen for the year:

- ◆ Douglas Berlin and the City of Beacon Planning Board for *Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation/Reuse* for the Piggy Bank Restaurant,



Left to right - John Nolon, Roger Akeley (Planning Commissioner), and Neil Wilson (DCPF President).

Upcoming Events

Telecommunication Course Announcement

Tuesday, May 14th, 2002
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm

At the Putnam County Courthouse,
40 Gleneida Ave., Carmel

The Putnam County Planning Department will be holding a training session dedicated exclusively to telecommunication towers. This NYS Department of State presentation will discuss the effect of the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act on municipal regulations, how a municipality can prepare for an application to construct a wireless communication facility or tower, and aesthetic issues in siting telecommunication towers. Free of charge, but REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Please call Jennifer Coccozza at (845) 486-3600. 🌳

- ◆ Town of Pawling Planning Board for *Outstanding Achievement in Open Space Preservation* for the Deerfield Ponds cluster subdivision, and
- ◆ Lewis Ruge and the Village of Rhinebeck for *Outstanding Achievement in Redevelopment* for the Subaru Dealership.

A special Distinguished Achievement Award was presented to Kent Johnson, Chairman of the Town of Pawling Planning Board, in recognition of his outstanding and illustrious service to the cause of sound planning and development in Dutchess County, and for his many years of hard work,

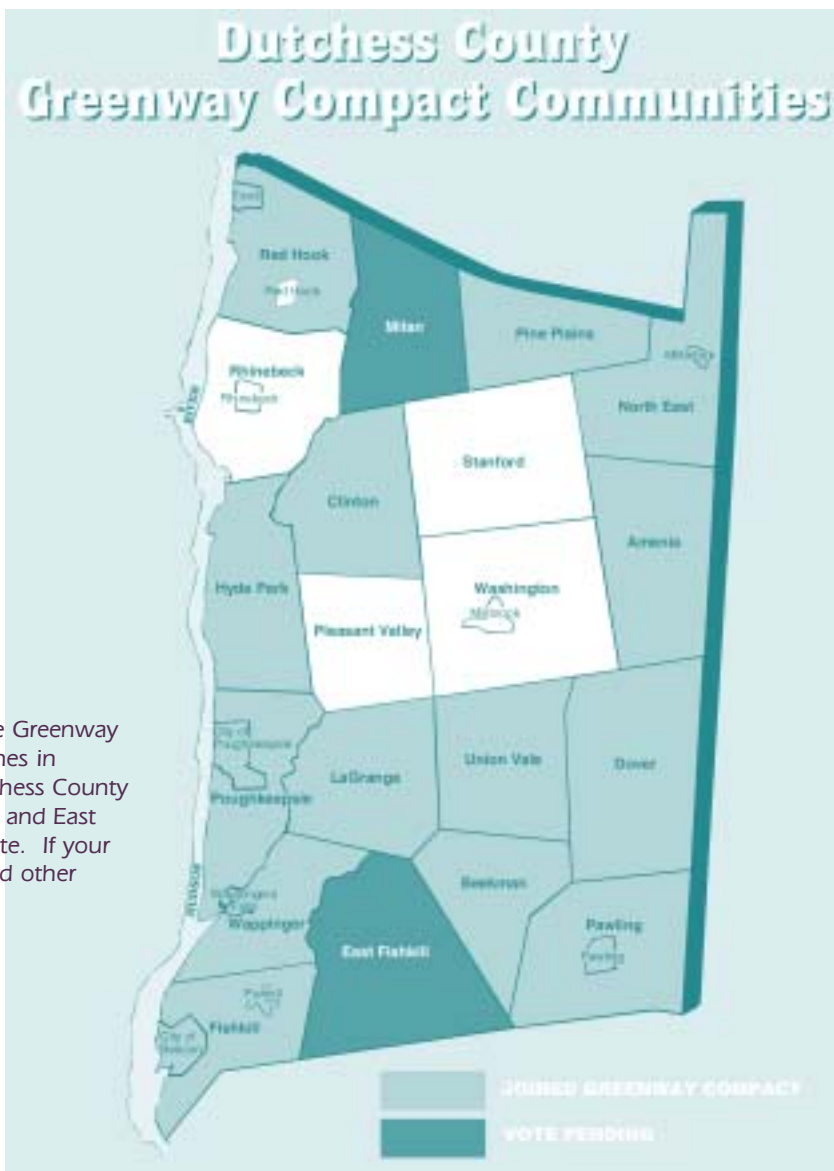
dedication and enthusiasm for the people of the Town of Pawling.

The evening ended with County Planning Commissioner Roger P. Akeley presenting each of the newest Greenway Compact communities with a commemorative plaque (complete with post), which will mark their Greenway trees that they will receive this spring.



Greenway Compact Update

So far, 21 Dutchess County municipalities have joined the Greenway Compact and cross-referenced the principles and guidelines in *Greenway Connections* into their local regulations. Dutchess County has also approved the Compact, and the towns of Milan and East Fishkill have had public hearings and are preparing to vote. If your community is a member, it is eligible to receive grants and other Greenway Compact benefits.



Hudson Greenway Trail Tour

End-to-End through the Hudson Valley

August 1 - August 10, 2002

NY City to the NY Capital District

Start: Battery Park, Manhattan Finish: Battery Park, Waterford

A core group of 5 to 8 people will hike and bike from NYC to Waterford (north of Albany) traveling on both sides of the Hudson River, and stopping at local events, historic sites, downtowns and other places that highlight the character and appeal of the Hudson River Valley and its Greenway Trails. Greenway is encouraging individuals and groups to join the core group along the way for the day or part of the day. Local establishments will be patronized to demonstrate the economic benefits of trail use, and workshops will be held to promote the Greenway Trail System concept.

Please mail to:

Hudson River Valley Greenway, Capitol Building Room 254, Albany, New York 12224

www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Fax: _____ email: _____

County: _____

☐ Are you interested in volunteering your time to help with this trail event?

☐ Are you interested in joining the Greenway Trail hikers for a day, or a portion of the day, during this event?

☐ Are you interested in sponsoring a local event or or meal in your community?

All You Have To Do is Ask...

A well-landscaped and architecturally attractive gas station near Kingston, Rhode Island, with the convenience store up front and the canopy and pumps to the rear.



The typical gas station design, featuring standard corporate architecture and the gas pumps/canopy at the front of the site with the building in the rear, is evolving as communities are asking for more. New stations that are architecturally designed to be compatible with the character of the community and laid out so that the building is up front with a relationship to the street, are popping up all over, even in Dutchess County (as featured in previous issues).

The American Planning Association featured new design principles in its January 2001 Planning Advisory Service Memo titled *A New Urbanism Approach to Service Station Design*. These principles emphasize the importance of highlighting the building and its architecture, rather than the gas pumps, canopy and signage.

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A Dutchess County Planning Federation Newsletter

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